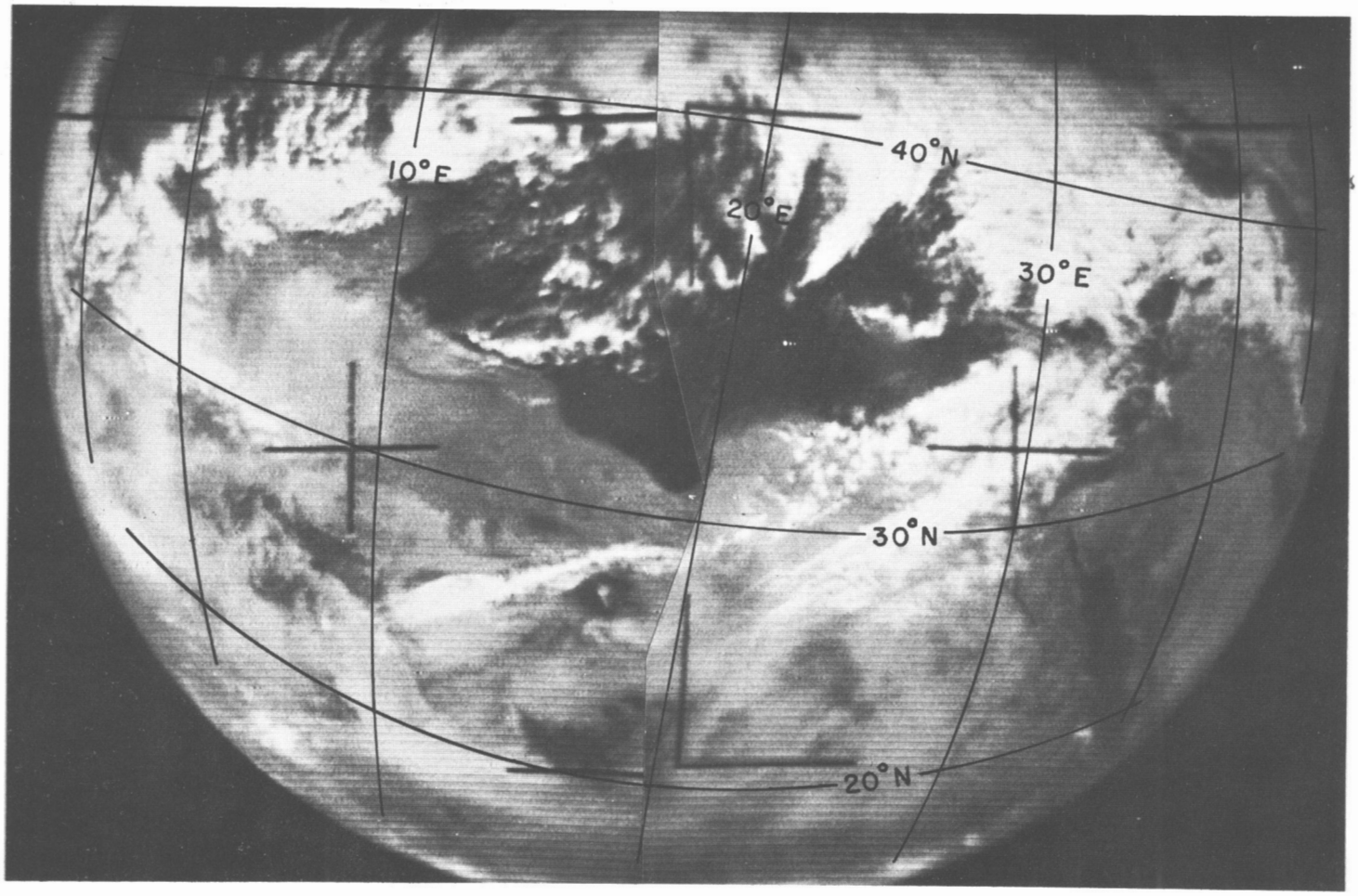
PICTURE OF THE MONTH



This large-scale view of North Africa and the Mediterranean area was photographed by TIROS IX (pass 232/231, cameras 1 and 2, frames 5) on February 10, 1965, at 1218 GMT. The pictures were received at Gilmore Creek, Alaska, via tape mode. The unusually broad view was obtained because the satellite was at a high altitude in its elliptical orbit (1,130 statute miles), and because the combined angular view of the two cameras, canted in opposite directions, is greater than that obtainable from previous TIROS satellites.

The extensive east-west zone of clouds over the Mediterranean is associated with a complex cyclonic system. The apparent vortex centered near 39° N., 12° E. corresponds closely to the position of a cold-core cyclone at 500 mb. The vortex cloudiness is believed to be mostly at low and middle levels and is accentuated by orographic uplift across the mountains of northern Algeria.

The streak of cloud lying ENE–WSW across Libya is believed to be cirrus, perhaps associated with a jet stream.

The eastern and western horizons are separated by more than 70° of longitude. Along 27° N., the Persian Gulf is visible near the eastern horizon, and a portion of the West African coast appears near the western horizon. Other landmarks include the Red Sea, the Nile River, and much of the southern Mediterranean coastline. Many topographic features are visible in North Africa. The dark spot near 27° N., 17° E. is an elevated region of basalt—the so-called "black mountains", or Haruj el Aswad. The larger dark area near 21° N., 18° E. is also an elevated region with some peaks above 10,000 ft.